

Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force
747 Market Street Tacoma, TMB 243
Meeting #11 – March 14, 2019, 10:00am

10:05 am: Call to order

10:07 am: Approval of the Minutes

Doug Orth moved, Layne Alfonso seconded approval of February 14, 2019 meeting minutes. Motion passed.

10:07 am: Icebreaker

10:15 am: Memo regarding off-sight improvements

City Staff presented a memo (handout 1) titled *Task Force Recommendations for Off-Site Process Improvements*. The purpose of this memorandum is to memorialize off-site improvement process recommendations that came from the conversations that members of Tacoma's Planning and Development Services Department (PDS) had with the Tacoma Permit Advisory Task Force (PATF) at meetings on December 13, 2018 and February 14, 2019.

10:17 am: Definition and Overview: Expedited Review

Terry Forslund presented on Expedited Review (PowerPoint).

There was discussion of how staff have adapted to speed up the permit review process. One tool is for staff to do a completeness review and notify applicants if part of the permit application is missing. Should applicants get the missing pieces in before the permit is reviewed then they will be included in the review, instead of putting the permit on pause while staff wait for those items to be turned in. This reduces the overall time of the permit review. Staff also created completion review handouts as a pilot to better communicate with applicants (Handout 2). Task Force discussed updating language sent out by Accela to say something that reflects there is a completion review occurring. Staff specified that there may not be enough staff capacity to do a review for each application.

Staff referenced slide 9 in the PowerPoint and Handout 3 to discuss how expedited review funding works and how many permits it leads to. The City of Tacoma hasn't done a marketing blitz about this option. Utilization of expedited review is low. Peter Huffman said that if this program is not utilized then one day it may be taken off the table as an option. Staff answered questions about what a third party would do if brought in to assist with expedited review.

While reviewing slide 10 of the PowerPoint and what staff do to be more efficient questions came up about deferred submittals. Staff referenced a tip sheet available on the permitting website that was not brought to the meeting but was provided to Task Force members afterwards (Handout 4). Staff and the Task Force discussed how records are kept for deferred submittals and how they're incorporated into the main project. Staff explained upgrades to the process that were made over the last year to improve tracking of deferred submittals.

11:01 am: Brainstorm New Approaches and Solutions

Task Force discussed items related to expedited review.

Jim Dugan recommended that expedited review remain on the table as an option. Peter talked with the Task Force about what expedited review might look like, such as a relief valve verses cutting the line.

Justin Goroch praised the completeness review tip sheet and requested a tip sheet for all permit types. The question was raised whether expedited review was needed, or if applicants should be given the tools to submit adequate applications so that the process moves smoothly. Task Force members asked staff what other reasons there may be for expedited review. Staff shared that there were discussions about how to reduce costs and speed for affordable housing projects. The Task Force discussed how some types of projects have all the different project leaders and developers working in tandem, and some projects have different teams responsible for just their own piece and permit. This can lead to different outcomes and efficiencies.

The Task Force discussed how a “VIP Lane” could be created for applicants with a good track record who meet staff expectations. This fast lane could speed up the review timeline, so that well-done permits aren’t slowed down by more complicated projects or less complete applications. Questions were raised about equity.

Votes were taken on items discussed and consensus was reached to recommend:

- Maintaining expedited review option
- Creation of more tip sheets
- exploring options of what “VIP lanes” or Consistently Prepared Applicant (CPAs) submittal might look like

Peter Huffman raised the question of creating pre-approved plans tied to affordability projects, such as ADUs. An idea was raised that the City could develop a pre-approved plan that could be sold or given to someone in order to create a faster application process. The Task Force raised concerns that each site is different so one plan wouldn’t be interchangeable. Additionally, there were concerns that the same project seen all over town would be unappealing. There was consensus from the Task Force against this idea, as noted in the votes above.

11:41 am: Adjourned